

Targeting results: COMRAP graduates 53 trainers of trainers

September 17, 2010

#11



The COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Programme (COMRAP), implemented by the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), has trained 53 trainers of trainers in agro-development, in Lusaka, Zambia.

COMRAP, funded by the European Commission (EC) Food Facility, conducted the first of a series of intense Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshops in Lusaka, to train identified agro-dealer trainers from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda, from 6th to 13th September, 2010.

The Lusaka TOT Workshop was officially opened by Zambian Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, Mr. Abednego Banda, represented by the Director of Agribusiness and Marketing, Mr. Greenwell Mbozi.

Mr. Banda noted that the success of developing agro-dealer networks crucially depends on focused implementation strategies that are relevant to the realities of the situation in the region.

He said a network of well trained, certified and accredited agro-dealers would go a long way in improving extension services and improving input and output supply systems.

Mr. Banda encouraged participants to remain committed to contributing meaningfully to the establishment of a viable agricultural input supply system in the region.

He thanked the Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development (IFDC) and all partners directly involved in the agro-dealer development of COMRAP.

ACTESA CEO Dr. Cris Muyunda, represented by COMRAP Agro-Dealer Training Coordinator, Mr. Ken Shawa, emphasized that 3 million farmers would be reached with services provided by COMRAP that would include: training, certifying and accrediting over 5000 agro-dealers and training 700 executives and front office managers in rural financing and weather indexed insurance.

He said COMRAP would contribute to seed development initiatives in the region through provision of equipment for seed cleaning, multiplication and certification to national governments.

Dr. Muyunda expressed appreciation to the EU for funding COMRAP. Later during the training, Dr. Muyunda and EC delegation official, Ms. Stephanie Rousseau attended a session of the TOT. They both appreciated the rigour and value of the training and stressed the need to focus on the 40% target of women participation in the training.

The next TOT workshops will be held in Manzini, Swaziland to train identified agro-dealer trainers from Ethiopia and Swaziland from 16th to 23rd September, 2010, while the other will be held in Kigali, Rwanda to train identified agro-dealer trainers from Burundi and Rwanda from 27th September to 5th October, 2010.

Immediately after the Training of Trainers workshops are concluded, in-country trainings will begin. These will have an estimated 80 agro-dealers per session and 35 agents per session. Detailed work plans indicating training dates for Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe are ready.

The trainers being trained by COMRAP, will:

- ✍ Provide training in supply of inputs, business management and extension services to over 5000 agro dealers and 2,000 agents;
- ✍ Develop national and regional networks of certified rural agro-dealers;
- ✍ Develop accreditation centres for accrediting agro-dealers;
- ✍ Stimulate smallholder demand for improved agricultural inputs and facilitate the marketing of their surplus production.



EC delegation official, Ms Stephanie Rousseau with Dr Muyunda and lead Trainers from IFDC and Agmark

AAMP holds agricultural risk management workshop



The African Agricultural Markets Programme (AAMP) held its fourth policy seminar and training workshop in Malawi meant to explore strategies for agricultural risk management.

The workshop under the theme, 'Risk management in African agriculture: taking stock of what has and hasn't worked', was opened by Malawian Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Professor Peter Mwanza.

Prof. Mwanza, noted that finding risk management strategies and techniques that would work in Africa was of paramount importance if the region was to improve its productivity and ensure stable food supplies.

"It is my sincere hope that these deliberations will assist decision makers put in place risk management strategies and instruments targeted at vulnerable segments of our agri-business in order to guarantee prosperity for our region," he said.



CEO with Malawian Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Professor Peter Mwanza and PS Dr Daudi

ACTESACEO, Dr. Cris Muyunda noted that because of the slow progress in irrigation and improvement in infrastructure, the risks in agriculture remained enormous in the region.

He said the agricultural sector, particularly in the ESA region, was not only dependent on weather conditions but also suffered from natural disasters.

Dr. Muyunda said threats that needed to be managed included fire, lightning, frost, excessive rain, drought including excessive heat waves, uncontrollable crop diseases and pests.

He said for agricultural risks to be managed successfully, public support was required.

"Global experience shows that given the special nature of agriculture, governments can either subsidize the premiums farmers pay and/or lay the foundation for emergence of insurance markets," he said. "Public support benefits not only the actors but the entire economy because of the backward and forward linkages with the rest of the economy."

Dr. Muyunda said agricultural risk management was about developing a strategy to avoid, reduce, accept and share risk.

He stressed the need for renewed public and private efforts to design appropriate risk management mechanisms and support to increase coverage and improve viability of risk management schemes.

King Mswati visits ACTESA stand at SITF



Dr Muyunda with His Majesty, King Mswati III

The ACTESA Secretariat participated at the Swaziland International Trade Fair (SITF) and its stand was visited by high level delegations which, included, His Majesty, King Mswati III and the Queen Mother, Her Majesty the Indlovukazi Ntombi.

The SITF which took place from 27 August to 6 September 2010 was held alongside the 14 Summit of the COMESA Authority.

ACTESA CEO and other ACTESA staff received King Mswati on August 28, and explained ACTESA's mission and objectives to him. The King expressed his appreciation of the Agency and thanked Dr. Muyunda for his explanation.



Dr Muyunda with Hon. Mutati

Earlier before the King's arrival, Her Majesty the Queen Mother also took time to visit the ACTESA stand.



Dr Muyunda with Swaziland Prime Minister, Mr Barnabas Dlamini

Other dignitaries who visited the stand included: Swaziland Prime Minister, Mr. Barnabas Dlamini, the Deputy Swazi Prime Minister, Mr. Themba Masuku, various Swazi ministers, Queen LaGija, Queen Ngangaza, Queen Lamotsa, Zambian Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Hon. Felix Mutati; Eritrean Minister, Hon. Ghebremariam, Zimbabwean Minister of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, Hon. Tapiwa Mashakada; Permanent Secretaries from governments in the region, President of the PTA Bank, Dr Michael Gondwe, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry in Zambia, Dr Buleti Nsemukila and other senior members of governments and private sector.

To Page 3

The delegates commended the Agency and encouraged the staff to continue its hard work in the region.

The ACTESA stand was also visited by various members of the public, who expressed satisfaction at the services offered by the Agency.

For more information on ACTESA and its programs visit our Website on :www.actesacomesa.org

SITF photo gallery

